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## ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIAL FOR BULLETINS TO BE USED IN LIBRARY EXTENSION SERVICE

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During the past ten years the Division of Extension of the University of North Carolina has issued from 90 to 100 bulletins, many of which have been prepared to promote some form of library extension service. In the preparation of this material a fairly definite line of procedure, based upon an accumulating experience, has been followed. In response to a request from your program committee and with the hope that our experience may be of service to others engaged in similar work, it is my purpose to present in bare outline this method of procedure.

1. The first step in the preparation of bulletins of this nature, bulletins concerning debate, citizenship, community drama, playgrounds, consolidated schools, the beautification of school grounds, which come under the subject of this paper, is, quite naturally, that of determining the particular subject of which the bulletin shall treat. This selection must be thoughtfully made, and if it is within my province to suggest who should make it, I should say that it should be by the director of extension and the chief of the library extension service. It should unquestionably be decided by those members of the extension administration who are constantly serving the needs of the public and are responsible for the carrying out of a sustained program of extension work. No matter from what source the suggestion as to subject comes, whether from an individual, or a club, or a special organization, or from the service offered by some other extension division, the subject must be considered in relation to the special program of which it is to be a part.

2. Once the subject is chosen, an author or compiler must be selected who is qualified to handle it, and (which is of even greater importance) handle it from the point of view of the director of extension rather than that of, say, the head of an English or

some other academic department. It has long since been conclusively demonstrated that many members of a faculty whose services in the classroom are of a high order are altogether unsuccessful as correspondence teachers. It is equally demonstrable that not all good teachers are good authors of extension bulletins, but that there is really an art in fitting a publication of this nature to the special group for whom it is intended. At the beginning of our work, members of the faculty who were employed to prepare bulletins, particularly programs for women's clubs, almost invariably worked out a syllabus, which, if adopted by a club, was usually soon abandoned, or had to be worked over and put into usable form. More recently this difficulty has been overcome in that specimens of successful programs have been available, and a fairly good honorarium is promised for the delivery of a manuscript which meets certain requirements. To my mind, it is absolutely necessary, not that the offering shall be low-brow, but that it shall be altogether worth while and that it shall be put in sufficiently clear and attractive form to elicit and hold the interest of people who make use of the service for what they get out of it and not because a dean of students, with all the disciplinary authority of an institution, is lined up behind them.

3. The third essential is to furnish the author such library material as is essential to the preparation of the bulletin. In our case, the bibliographical tools of the library are, as a matter of course, always at the disposal of the author. In addition to this, the library sets aside a special fund of several hundred dollars, for the use of the library extension service division in the preparation of bulletins. If new books are required, or if duplicate copies are needed, they are secured immediately and the author makes such use of them as is desired. This is extremely important, and adequate provision must be made for it. However, in the preparation of bulletins for study clubs or other organizations following a fairly definite course of study, it is extremely important for the author to base the course on some single text or at most two or three volumes which can be easily secured. Long bibliographies should be studiously shunned, particularly if the

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\*Read by Mr. Baker, assistant to Mr. Wilson.

service is intended for communities that have very inadequate public library service.

4. When the manuscript, prepared in conformity with these suggestions, has been accepted and while the publication is going through the press, all books and materials referred to in the publication should be brought together and arranged in such a way as to be available when the bulletin is distributed. A bulletin supported in this way by an adequate package library service is far more effective than one which is not. Furthermore, not only are more books and periodicals called into use to support the subject matter of the particular bulletin in question, but the whole work of the library extension service division is emphasized in the mind of the public.

While these four steps are the essential ones in the preparation of the type of bulletin we are discussing, possibly two other observations might be made with profit here. An effort should be made, particularly on the part of state institutions engaged in library extension service, not to duplicate publications. In North Carolina it has been easy to avoid duplication, as the University, until recently, has had a free hand in extension work of all kinds. In the case of our publication treating of the beautification and improvement of school grounds, however, we found it desirable to co-operate with the State Department of Education; and in the case of our bulletin on parent-teachers associations we have kept in mind the service of the North Carolina College for Women. So far there has been but little duplication of effort on the part of the library extension service of the Division of Extension of the University of North Carolina Library Commission, as the former has devoted itself almost entirely to supplying material essential to the carrying out of special programs, whereas, the latter has limited itself largely to the task of supplying material to schools for use in debate and the discussion of current events. Special effort, certainly, should

be made to avoid excessive duplication, not so much because it is expensive, but because it may furnish the opportunity to the man who wishes to make trouble. In reality, excessive duplication of library extension service in North Carolina, which has in its public libraries only 56 volumes to every 1000 inhabitants, is an impossibility, as it very probably is in the rural sections of almost all the states.

The second observation is that after the material is organized and published, the work will have been done to but little purpose unless a satisfactory plan of "selling" it to the public is devised and employed. In this respect our service has been unusually successful, as attested by the rapidity with which many of the bulletins have become out of print, and by the steadily mounting number of programs and pieces of material sent out.

In conclusion I wish to submit for examination, which will prove of more value probably than these suggestions, copies of a half dozen of our most typical bulletins, as follows: *Public discussion and debate*, *Constructive ventures in government*, *The parent-teacher association*, *Studies in southern literature*, *The beautification and improvement of school grounds*, and *Plays for amateurs*. All represent phases of our library extension service, and all have been widely used by individuals and clubs in North Carolina and many other states.

A general discussion followed the reading of these papers. After the discussion it was moved that the University Library Extension Service workers take the steps necessary for affiliation as a group with the American Library Association.

The following officers were elected for next year's meeting:

Chairman, Edith Thomas, of the University of Michigan Library Extension Service.

Secretary, LeNoir Dimmitt, loan librarian, Extension Division, University of Texas.

EDITH THOMAS,  
Chairman.



